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Patriotism Through Education Series

No. 8

# The Outlook for Democracy

Address by

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at

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LADIES AND GENTLEMEN .

Two ideals, as far removed from each other as the poles, are today in conflict for the mastery of the world. In the one, which is based upon the ancient doctrine of the divine right of kings, the individual is a pawn to be moved about and sacrificed at the will of the controlling power. Opposed to this autocratic conception of government is the democratic ideal that all men are created with the inalienable right through their co-operative efforts to control their own destinies. The great conflict, which has now been joined for a period of nearly three years, is the outcome of a most comprehensive and scientifically organized plot by autocratic rulers to secure through a series of successful wars the domination of the world.

Conquerors have before appeared upon the stage, some of them equipped with the qualities necessary to accomplish the subjugation of the world of their day, and in a number of instances they have been able to come within measurable distances of their goal. Each has owed his measure of success in some degree either to a prevalent superstitious belief in his invincibility or to the superior organization and discipline of his followers, advantages which have not required a prolonged period for preparation. The great advance of science which has been largely accomplished during the last half century, has brought a revolution in the nature of warfare between nations and transformed it into a competition of complex engines and ingenious new-found inventions which are wrought out in advance, are handled by corps of highly trained technical experts, and are fed by hoarded supplies of munitions so large as almost to surpass belief. Science has thus unwittingly placed a premium upon dishonesty of purpose and given every advantage to the predatory nations. Unless warned in time and forfeited through expensive preparations, those nations which are peacefully inclined are at the mercy of their aggressive neighbors. The predatory nations will therefore see to it that their own preparations are carried out under disguises and

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as secretly as possible, while they develop by every means in their power the pacifist tendencies which may be either latent or active in those neighboring nations which it is their purpose to attack. As between autocratic nations, those in a backward position of industrial development are under a serious handicap which may be insurmountable. Advance in technical science when combined with highly developed and efficient organization of a virile race, may offset great superiority in man power or of personal courage and individual skill.

### **Studiously Planned.**

As in an open book, the war has now revealed to us what before was patent to the few, that the assault by Germany upon her European neighbors had been studiously planned and industriously worked out during more than a generation, and formed but a part of that comprehensive scheme of conquest which had been launched by Bismarck in 1864 with the wresting of Schleswig-Holstein from Denmark, and had been followed after the elimination of Austria by the crushing defeat of France in 1870 and the ruthless taking over of Alsace-Lorraine. The present attack was to have been limited to France and Russia, and was to have been followed later by wars aimed at England and afterward at the United States. It is this which explains the outcry that was set up in Germany when England cast in her lot with her natural allies rather than wait for "The Day" of the inevitable assault upon her after France and Russia had been reduced to impotence.

In most respects the German plan seemed perfect, and the attention which had been paid to each detail is marked by an efficiency which has compelled our admiration; but Germany has none the less labored under one heavy handicap. No amount of industrious forethought could correct the myopia of a mental vision which had been constantly focussed upon intrigue. From this defect in her outlook upon the future, the German military caste has made repeated and fatal misjudgments of national and race psychology. With clearer vision than his followers and imitators, Bismarck declared "we cannot foresee the cards held by Providence so clearly as to anticipate historical development through personal calculation."

With varying degrees of impatience and irritation, we have listened to the most vociferous and persistent German denials, both official and unofficial, that she has had any part either in planning or in beginning this war. Standing upon the balcony of the Royal Palace in Berlin just after he had launched his armies upon Belgium, the German Kaiser declared to the immense throng assembled below, "Envious nations on all sides are forcing us to justified defense. They are forcing the sword into my hand. . . . And now I bid you go to church, bow down before God and ask His help for our brave army." In the earlier German denials, it was rehearsed in chorus that France had begun the war, that French officers had flown over Belgium and that bombs had been thrown upon the Nuremberg railway station. Neither statement was true, and the Nuremberg story was later repudiated by the German who it was claimed had made the charge. Somewhat later, Germany's charge of responsibility for beginning the war was transferred to Russia, and eventually, after the initial reverses, when efforts to obtain separate peace with France and Russia were being undertaken, to the shoulders of England. Germans then were asked to pray, "God punish England," and for composing the "Hymn of Hate" Lissauer was awarded the Iron Cross. Let us listen to a stanza of this hymn as it is being publicly rendered by a chorus of male voices to a great audience assembled in the *Alberthalle* in Leipsic, the composer accompanying his verses upon the piano to music written by the Director of Church Music at Chemnitz:

“French and Russian, they matter not,  
A blow for a blow, a shot for a shot,  
We fight the battle with bronze and steel,  
And the time that is coming peace will heal.  
But you we will hate with a lasting hate,  
We will never forego our hate,  
Hate by water and hate by land,  
Hate of the head and hate of the hand,  
Hate of the hammer and hate of the crown,  
Hate of seventy millions choking down.  
We love as one, we hate as one,  
We have one foe and one alone.

England!

## German Morals Bankrupt.

After nearly three years of frightful war, at first distraught by the new conditions, the world has at length acquired such a clear perspective that Germany's statements are no longer taken at their face value. Her credit for veracity has fallen even lower than her currency. In morals, she is today a bankrupt. The "inveterate confidence" in her which for so long tied our hands in this country while the German embassy at Washington was working overtime to direct the plots against our Government, has now given place to a clarity of vision and to a determination to make every resource available against the common enemy of mankind that must bring satisfaction to every loyal citizen. In his Flag Day address, President Wilson has given us a trenchant statement of our case which every American should read. Of the "Military Masters of Germany" he says:

"They filled our unsuspecting communities with vicious spies and conspirators and sought to corrupt the opinion of our people in their own behalf. When they found they could not do that, their agents diligently spread sedition amongst us and sought to draw our own citizens from their allegiance—and some of these agents were men connected with the official embassy of the German government itself here in our own Capitol. They sought by violence to destroy our industry and arrest our commerce. They tried to incite Mexico to take up arms against us and to draw Japan into a hostile alliance with her—and that not by indirection, but by direct suggestion from the Foreign Office in Berlin. They impudently denied us the use of the high seas and repeatedly executed their threats that they would send to their death any of our people who ventured to approach the coasts of Europe."

It might be added that for many years before the war Germany labored diligently through the medium of the departments of German in our American universities to forward the *Kultur* propaganda, enjoining upon American citizens of German ancestry the continued use of the German language and the retention of German ideals and connections. In each of our Middle Western state universities a professor has been the recognized state head of this "missionary movement." As the protecting cloak of the church has often covered a culprit, so in Michigan the aegis of a well-known

patriotic organization has been extensively used to promote the movement for "Deutschland Ueber Alles." Federal laws to meet adequately the dangers of espionage and sedition have been lacking in this country, as was demonstrated during the dynamite outrages of the first years of war particularly, and I am informed by one in a position to know that bills which before the war had repeatedly been introduced into the National Congress, in order to remedy this defect, were defeated in committee through German influence. It is only in the last few weeks that this legislation has at last been secured.

The amount of treasure devoted by Germany to preparations for her assault have been little comprehended in this country. I have been told by a well-known military expert long resident in Berlin, where he was in intimate association with the German Great General Staff, that at the outbreak of war Germany had ready complete equipment for no less than thirty millions of soldiers. Highly trained officers, the lack of which in sufficient numbers has proved such a handicap to the Entente Allies, were available in Germany not alone to supply her own armies and to replace the wastage of war, but sufficient to officer to a large extent the armies of Turkey and Bulgaria, and to some extent also those of Austro-Hungary.

### **The Kriegsbuch.**

The unscrupulous use of deception and intrigue, in combination with an inhuman barbarity, is what experts have called "absolute war." A reading of the *Kriegsbuch*, or Official Manual, prepared for the use of officers of the German army, helps us to understand why the German soldiers entered Belgium supplied as a part of their regular equipment with ingenious devices for efficient incendiarism and pillage:

"A war conducted with energy," declares the *Kriegsbuch*, "cannot be directed merely against combatants of the enemy state and the positions they occupy, but it will in like manner seek to destroy the total intellectual and material resources of the latter. . . ."

"By steeping himself in military history, an officer will be able to guard himself against excessive humanitarian notions; it will teach him that certain severities are indispensable to war, nay more, that the only true humanity very often lies in a ruthless application of them."

To apply Nietzsche's expression, "the blond beast lustfully roving" on its passage through Belgium obeyed to the letter this course of instruction, reinforced by the Kaiser's parting injunction to the German Expeditionary Force of the Boxer Rebellion: "Let all who fall into your hands be at your mercy. Just as the Huns a thousand years ago under the leadership of Attila, gained a reputation in virtue of which they still live in historical tradition, so may the name of Germany become known in such wise in China that no Chinaman will ever even dare to look askance at a German."

To influence public opinion, nearly one hundred of the most distinguished German scientists drew up and signed a declaration addressed "to the civilized world," in which, among other statements, these are given prominence: "*It is not true* that Germany is guilty of having caused this war. . . . *It is not true* that the life and property of a single Belgian citizen was injured by our soldiers without the bitterest self-defense having made it necessary. . . . *It is not true* that our troops treated Louvain brutally. . . . *It is not true* that our warfare pays no respect to international laws."

In these false declarations by German scientists whose names are many of them household words—declarations which have never been withdrawn—German science has met the greatest downfall in her history, and never before had she attained to so high a position in the world.

As we now survey in all its hideous nakedness the German plan of conquest, we are surprised that the world has been so blind as not to see what is in such clear light today. It is, however, but an illustration of the strong tendency on the part of our God-fearing and peacefully inclined people to judge the motives of others in accord with their own, and in their strongly developed optimism to believe that only which is pleasant and agreeable. In France, the meditated attack by Germany was nearer. It had for years hung over the land like a horrid nightmare and the blow was awaited with a dread that the crushing defeat of 1870 was to be repeated. England, more under the influence of the professional pacifist and behind a moat of sea, responded hardly at all when Earl Roberts sounded the clarion call to arms before it should be too late, and America has long been under the spell of its orators of pacifism, notably Bryan and Jordan.

## Plan Revealed.

To one not obsessed by these vagaries, the impending conflict was clearly revealed in all its main outlines. In order to galvanize the German people for the ordeal which was before them, the German government thought it well to more than hint that "world domination or downfall" spelled the future of the German Empire. General Bernhardt of the German General Staff brought out his brutally frank "Germany and the Next War," which was issued with every encouragement of the government and ran through numerous German editions. The philosophy of Nietzsche, which glorified barbaric war and the savage superman and ridiculed the precepts of the Christian religion, was developed in Germany as a special cult. Homer Lea's "The Day of the Saxon," which in clear outlines set forth Germany's plan of conquest of Great Britain and showed its entire feasibility, was at once translated into German, and its large sale was apparently fostered by the Imperial Government.

Sig. Giolotti has made public how in 1912 the German ambassador von Wagenheim at Constantinople confided to his colleague, Marquis Garroni, the Italian ambassador, the outlines of the German scheme of conquest, the Italian ambassador being known to be a strong defender of the Triple Alliance. In the same year, I was myself in Budapest as the guest of an Hungarian nobleman, in consequence of having been invited to address the Hungarian Geographical Society. My host, who was in close touch with his government and who has since been killed in the war, did not hesitate to inform me that as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the Balkan war of that year, Austro-Hungary would take upon herself the punishment of Servia. My intimation that such action could hardly fail to ignite the European conflagration was acknowledged as though it were well understood. He also gave me the information, which I afterwards confirmed, that the Austrian army was then largely mobilized and that two army corps were operating upon the French border with the German army. This mobilization has since taken on the aspect of a dress rehearsal of the present war, for it will perhaps be remembered that two Austrian army corps, and only two, took part in the early operations on the Western battle front.

If I have made clear that the present war is the result of a premeditated attack by the German government upon



her European neighbors and was planned as part of an even larger scheme of conquest, to what extent were the German people responsible for this supreme crime of history? This question is vital and is difficult to answer by one not familiar with the conditions of German life and with the absolute monarchy which there lurks behind the framework of popular government. In 1888-9, a student at a German university and a frequent visitor since that time, I have been much impressed, as every traveller must be, by the submissive attitude of the German people and the absolute obedience to the last letter of the law which is continually exacted from them. The form of government, which the scheme of Bismarck provided for Germany, permitted a limited amount of criticism and such social legislation as was not too offensive to the Imperial Government, but no responsible ministry and a parliament over which the Kaiser exercises an absolute veto. As is well known, Bismarck ruled Prussia for four years without a parliament, and the Government's treatment of the resolution of the Reichstag following the notorious Zabern scandal shows that such a suspension of parliamentary government might easily arise in Germany. As the Kaiser has bluntly expressed it, "The soldier and the army and not Parliamentary majorities and resolutions have welded together the German Empire." And, "Regarding myself as the tool of God, and without consideration of the notions and opinions of the day, I go my way." Submission to authority has thus become the alpha and omega of existence throughout the German Empire.

### **The Task Ahead.**

If democracy is not to perish from the earth, it is clear that we must bend every effort to defeat decisively the autocrats in government now leagued together as the Central Powers and absolutely dominated by Germany. How sorely this will tax our courage and our resources we as yet hardly realize. Every long war has passed through the three successive stages of the *onset*, the *grip* and the *drag*. Where there is great superiority of available military power massed upon one side, the decision has sometimes been reached in the *onset*, as in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866. We have reason to believe that Germany expected to crush France in this initial phase, but, after the German armies had recoiled from the Marne and from before Calais, the *grip* of war

may be said to have begun, when Russia and France, and later Britain and Italy, brought their full forces into action. Those forces have now reached their maximum, and the trying test of endurance which constitutes the *drag* of war is already upon us. The war will be decided in favor of the group of powers which can longest supply the sinews of war—the money, munitions and men. Of the first, we have already made a large contribution and are prepared to follow it by others; of munitions our contribution has been considerable, and of men it is as yet altogether insignificant.

Our first effective assistance to our allies, if we except our loans of money, has been made through our navy, several sections of modern destroyers being already in operation against submarines in British waters. For all that the public may know, a squadron of our modern dreadnoughts may already be in a strategic position in support of the plans of the British Admiralty. Our base hospitals and ambulance corps are beginning to make their appearance in Europe to relieve the great strain upon those of our allies, and our taking over of the contracts for neutral ships under construction in American yards, in connection with the embargo placed upon food products, together constitute the first really effective blockade of Germany.

Our greatest early opportunity to render efficient military aid at the battle front, must, however, be a supply of aeroplane squadrons, since these can be more quickly improvised by a nation which leads the world in the manufacture of automobiles, and whose citizens are by temperament especially fitted for supreme demands upon individual initiative and resourcefulness. Mr. Howard Coffin, a graduate of the University of Michigan, and Detroit's distinguished representative upon the Advisory Board to the National Defense Council, has outlined plans to have the government furnish a thousand flyers a month with the first contingent ready to depart in September. Our early entry into the war in the field of aviation may contribute both to reduce the submarine menace and to effectually blind the enemy in his land operations at the battle front. Upon the authority of Mr. Coffin, it is further the purpose of our government to supply American railway engineers in sufficient numbers to take over the operation of the French railways and so, in some measure, to relieve the terrible strain upon our sister republic. Ten thousand railway engineers are already in uniform and

will be sent to France at the earliest opportunity. The Trans-Siberian Railway, the great artery for supplying the Russian armies, now clogged and incapable of moving the mountains of munitions which have accumulated at Vladivostock, is likewise to be operated by American engineers as an American railway at the earliest possible moment. The nation may well take heart when men like Mr. Coffin and those associated with him in the Advisory Board to the Council of National Defense are giving up their entire time in a devoted effort to achieve the utmost in this supreme crisis.

Though our assistance in other fields cannot be made immediately available, it must none the less be most vigorously pushed in order to become available at all. Here, the ship-building emergency stands first in importance and the food supply second; since not only food, but coal, steel, and oil, must be supplied to our allies at the earliest moment, and the movement of troops will eventually require the continuous use of an immense fleet of transports. Those who have followed carefully the shipping situation in this country have not been deceived by the controversy which has arisen, and they must be fully aware that in the plan of General Goethals both wooden and steel ships are to be built to the full capacity of the country.

### **The Food Problem.**

We have upon us now the heavy burden of feeding, not only ourselves, but in large measure the Western European nations as well. Here, patriotism counsels that we should not even consider the profits to ourselves, but should put forth our utmost efforts so as to increase to the limit the world's supply of food. The best that we can do will be all too little, and if the government is able to manage the problem of transportation, as it must, it need not be feared that prices will anywhere fall below the normal. There is every reason to suppose that they will soar even higher.

There is evidence that under cover of supposed war conditions, unscrupulous persons have succeeded in establishing artificial prices for some of the necessities of life. It is therefore imperative that the government, with the least possible delay, assume control of market conditions upon the basis of thorough investigation and with the exercise of somewhat arbitrary powers. Let us not make the mistake

of England in assuming that the war is to be quickly ended, and in delaying to take as war measures only such drastic action as alone can avert disaster. Let us echo the slogan that no one is to make profits out of the war.

Not only must we increase production, but we must conserve supply through prevention of waste. It has been said, I think correctly, that the average French family can live on what the average American family habitually wastes. Much of the waste of our hotel and other public dining-rooms is due largely to false standards which have grown up and become fixed by habit. A well-known millionaire merchant has recently voiced his protest against some of the glaring extravagances of our more expensive hostelries. The Delaware, Lackawanna & Western Railroad has now for some time served smaller and so-called "war portions" of food in its dining cars. May other roads follow this excellent example.

The above are some of the steps which we must take, some of which our government has already wisely taken, in order to come to the aid of our allies. The chief menaces to the cause of democracy today, as a result of the war, are the submarine and the unsettled condition of Russia. The former we must endeavor to meet both by destroying the submarines themselves and by building ships so rapidly that, even if our attempts to overcome the submarine should be but partially successful, we may still be able to convey the necessary supplies to England, France and Italy.

As regards Russia, she appears now to have passed through the most dangerous stage of her revolution, in that the immediate menace of a separate peace has been removed. I am basing my judgment in part only upon the censored reports from Petrograd, but far more upon the bitter disappointment which is now clearly reflected in the German press. No one who has traveled in Russia can have overlooked the fact that the nation is essentially agricultural and that soldiers are mainly drawn from the peasant class. The industrial classes, which are now joyriding with liberty and have been skilfully deluded by Germany's agents, form but a relatively small section of the people, and their localization in and about the centre of government has accounted for the important rôle which they have thus far been able to play. This importance has steadily declined as the voice of the great Russian peasantry has become articulate. The peasants and the soldiers, as well as the responsible business men, are

now united for a continuation of the war, and the early stages of the new government having now been passed, one may survey the future with less of apprehension. The admirable message to Russia of President Wilson, the arrival of the Root and the Stevens Commissions, and the considerable leaven of Russians, educated in self-government, who are now returning to their former homes from this country, must all weigh heavily in the balance on the side of a stable government. The successful drive in Galacia, led personally by that great War Minister, Kerensky, assures us that the republican army is really to play a rôle in the campaign, even of the present season.

### **Pitfalls in the Path.**

There are pitfalls in the path of democracy against which it is necessary continually to guard, pitfalls which have been dug, or will be in the future, through the machinations of the German autocracy. Most dangerous among these are, first, the allurements of the outwardly humanitarian idea of a "peace without victory," and, second, the powers which may be in hiding behind any future overturn of the German government. The danger of the former is less than it was, now that the world has been the spectator of a futile demonstration in which the American government for the time played the hand of Germany and echoed her cries for a "peace without victory" and "freedom of the seas."

It should be sufficient for us to remember that a century ago, when the world was, as now, in arms against an autocratic scheme for military conquest, a "peace without victory" was duly signed with Napoleon at Amiens, which proved to be for him a convenient breathing spell, and that the war was resumed after little more than a year of peace, so that he rose at that time to his greatest power, and it was only twelve years later that he was decisively defeated upon the field of Waterloo.

We are in danger of focusing our attention too much upon the hardships of Germany and to the evidences of discontent among her people, in the vain hope that she will soon be compelled to sue for peace. While it is easy to believe that she is already in great distress, it is only necessary to reflect upon the huge penalties which must inevitably be exacted from her for her wild riot of destruction, to be convinced that she will continue the fight to the last extrem-

ity. Her people have been fed so largely upon reports of victories, "retreats to victory," and upon the invincibility of Hindenburg and the Kaiser that they are likely to be even now far removed from a correct understanding of the real state of affairs. Then, too, the security which the German government has offered for the many loans to finance the war is now nothing more than the hope of indemnity to be exacted from Germany's enemies. With her foreign commerce on which she is so dependent already taken from her, with foreign nations more and more independent of her exports and leagued together for mutual trade relations after the war, with a large proportion of her merchant fleet either destroyed or seized and operated by the allies, the government can still lead the people to continue the war in a last desperate hope that the tide will yet turn in their favor.

However strong may be the demand for peace at whatever price, the German government cannot be forced to yield to the popular demands so long as the army remains unaffected, for the German army, as the Kaiser has told us, is the bulwark of his Empire. When such disaffection becomes serious, as at some time it must, the military caste will play its last desperate card and stage an overturn to a popular government which can still be controlled from behind the scenes.

### **Peace Guarantees.**

Whether such a stroke can be driven home is for the future to determine, but the allied governments cannot afford to conclude a peace without guarantees of a practical nature that the terms of the surrender will be rigorously adhered to. More than once in the history of the Hohenzollerns (as of the Hapsburgs) solemn treaties have been shown to be in their estimation only "scraps of paper" to be torn up under the urgency of military necessity or even of personal convenience. As Frederick William IV is said to have remarked in 1847, when repudiating his pledge to grant a parliament to the Prussian people, "I will never let a sheet of written paper come between our Lord God in Heaven and our country, to rule us with its paragraphs and to put them in the place of ancient loyalty."

There is now little merit in our saying that, had we earlier entered upon our duties in this great struggle, the outlook for democracy must have been far brighter than it is.

The fact is that we have but just come in, and it is for us to so play our part that we may redeem the past in so far as that is now possible. Even now, the country is not fully awake to the situation, but, thank God, it is rapidly awakening. It is my firm conviction that, once thoroughly aroused, America will do honor to her noblest traditions and will patiently undergo even the greatest sacrifices; for whether democracy or autocracy is to win, it is now for us to determine.

Can we descry upon the horizon a permanent peace such as we all earnestly long for, and which we will yearn after with ever-increasing longings as the weary months and probably years of war drag on? We should be honest with ourselves and admit that belief in such a happy outcome, if we entertain it, is nothing more substantial than the visualizing of our hopes, and that neither history nor sound logic supplies any warrant for such faith. Let us not deceive ourselves, but rather, taking counsel from past disappointments, let us see to it that the future is made safe for democracy through such permanent military preparations as will permit us again to devote ourselves to the arts of peace while ever ready to play in the world that noble part of which our past record has supplied the promise.



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